



Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-00

INFO LOG-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 EUR-00 SS-00 CIAE-00
H-01 NSC-01 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 HA-09 L-03
PM-10 PA-01 OMB-01 INRE-00 SP-02 SNP-01 PRS-01
SLPD-01 /042 W

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O 072320Z MAR 86
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9414
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN
DIA WASHDC
RUEOSBA/24COMPW/DOJ
USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA
USIA WASHDC 6424

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
☒ Release () Excise () Deny ☒ Declassify
Date 2/27/02 Exemption _____

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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL PGOV PROP, NU
SUBJECT: BISHOP VEGA ATTACKED FOR HIS WASHINGTON REMARKS
ROME FOR EMBASSY VATICAN (INFO)

1. (U) PRO-GON DAILIES BARRICADA AND EL NUEVO DIARIO (END
REACTED STRONGLY ON MARCH 7 TO THE NEWS THAT MONSIGNOR
PABLO ANTONIO VEGA, BISHOP OF JUIGALPA, HAD APPEARED AT A
HERITAGE FOUNDATION FUNCTION WITH RESISTANCE LEADERS
CALERO, BERMUDEZ AND CRUZ AND REPORTEDLY HAD MADE STATE-
MENTS ATTACKING THE SANDINISTAS AND SUPPORTING PRESIDENT
REAGAN'S EFFORT TO OBTAIN 100 MILLION DOLLARS FOR THE
INSURGENTS. BARRICADA ANNOUNCED IN BANNER HEADLINES THAT

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VEGA'S TIES TO THE CIA AND THE CONTRAS HAD BEEN UNCOVERED.

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WHILE END CALLED HIS REMARKS "INFAMOUS."

2. (U) BARRICADA OF MARCH 7 DEVOTED ALMOST A QUARTER OF ITS FOUR PAGE ISSUE (AND MOST OF THE FIRST PAGE) TO ATTACKING VEGA. IN AN UNUSUAL FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL IT REBUKED THE BISHOP FOR BEING INVOLVED IN "A POLITICAL ACT TOTALLY ALIEN TO HIS PASTORAL MISSION." AN ACCOMPANYING CARTOON SHOWED THE BISHOP HANDING A HAMMER TO AN UNCLE-SAM-LIKE FIGURE AS HE NAILED SOMEONE TO A CROSS, WHILE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD WATCHED. THE EDITORIAL WAS ACCOMPANIED BY ACCOUNTS OF VEGA'S STATEMENTS, REPORTED BY EFE AND THE NICARAGUAN NEWS SERVICE, AND CONCLUDED THAT VEGA HAD "OFFENDED AND MADE INDIGNANT" THE THOUSANDS OF MOTHERS OF NICARAGUAN MARTYRS AND WARNED THAT VEGA "HAS COMMITTED A GRAVE ERROR OF INCALCULABLE CONSEQUENCE FOR THE CREDIBILITY OF THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY."

3. (U) EL NUEVO DIARIO, RAN A SPECIAL "FOCUS" ARTICLE IN BOLD TYPE ON PAGE. IT SAID THAT THE BISHOP HAD SPOKEN AT A S GIVEN BY THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION, SAID THAT THE BISHOP'S STATEMENTS SHOWED THE IRRAT HATRED OF THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY FOR THE REVOLUTION, THE HIERARCHY HAD MADE COMMON CAUSE WITH THE "MERCENA AND THAT THE BISHOP WAS ONLY ANOTHER PIECE IN PRESIDE REAGAN'S CAMPAIGN. END FINISHED BY SAYING THAT NO HON PERSON COULD HAVE SUCH BISHOPS ACT AS MEDIATORS.

4. (C) COMMENT: THE ATTENTION GIVEN TO BISHOP VEGA'S REMARKS SHOW HOW MUCH THE FSLN FEARS THE DAMAGE T CHURCH CAN DO THE PARTY'S SELF PROCLAIMED IMAGE AS AN INNOCENT VICTIM OF THE USG. IT HOPES TO USE THE BISHOP'S OPEN APPEARANCE WITH CALERO, BERNUDEZ AND CRUZ ALSO TO DISCREDIT THE CHURCH, NOT ONLY AS A CRITIC OR POTENTIAL

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MEDIATOR (IN THE EYES OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD), BUT ALSO AS A CENTER OF POLITICAL POWER IN NICARAGUA. UNABLE TO STRIKE BACK PUBLICLY AT THE FSLN IN JANUARY, WHEN PRO-GON MEDIA TRIED TO PAINT HIM AS A BISHOP THE SANDINISTAS COULD LIVE WITH, VEGA HAS NOW HAD THE LAST WORD, FOR NOW. BERGOLD

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